



# MARSHALL STAR

Serving the Marshall Space Flight Center Community

Oct. 27, 2005

## *Space station experiment samples returned to Marshall for analysis*

By Lori Johnston Meggs

Even after years of exposure to the harsh environment of space, the trays of samples still resemble watercolor paint palettes. Similarly, the small mirrors that could contain data useful for space telescope design still sparkle. The Materials on International Space Station Experiment appears to have fared well, according to scientists, after flying in space three years longer than the one year planned.

"Overall, we're very happy with how well most of the materials held up over the last four years," said Miria Finckenor, the experiment's principal investigator for Marshall and an engineer in the Materials and Processes Laboratory.

Samples such as optical materials, thermal control coatings, hook and loop fasteners and other materials used on the space station were recently returned to the Marshall Center for analysis.

The experiment is the first to be externally mounted on the

*See MISSE on page 6*



Emmett Given/MSFC

Miria Finckenor holds dozens of samples from the Materials on International Space Station Experiment in a clean room in Marshall's Materials and Processes Laboratory. Finckenor is the principal investigator of the experiment for Marshall.

## *Sun breaks through clouds at Marshall cookout*



Terry Leibold/NASA

Marshall employees, along with guests from Stennis Space Center and Michoud Assembly Facility, feast on barbecue during the team cookout Oct. 25. Marshall managers hosted the lunch to thank their civil servants and contractors for the past year's hard work. The Marshall Exchange sponsored the cookout.

## Science@NASA

### Check out popular 'podcast'

The NASA science news resource managed at the Marshall Center is using "podcasting" — the hot, new trend in disseminating audio news and entertainment via the Internet — to bring NASA science messages to the public.

Podcasting is a fledgling medium, and was only given a name in 2004. Users can subscribe to regularly updated audio content from thousands of available sources. Daily or weekly episodes are automatically downloaded to each user's computer or portable MP3 player for convenient listening.

*See Podcast on page 3*

## Marshall unveils new Technology Investment Program

By Lori Johnston Meggs

The Marshall Center's Innovative Partnerships Program, managed by the Engineering Policies and Programs Office, has introduced a new Technology Investment Program to foster the development of emerging in-house technologies.

The program targets technologies that need an infusion of resources to advance research and development. To receive these funds, projects must meet an established technical need of a NASA mission directorate. The projects also must have the endorsement of the associated program manager and the commitment of an external partner, as evidenced by a Space Act Agreement or other cooperative agreement tool.

"Our office is pleased to unveil this new program and feels strongly that it will assist the Marshall Center in advancing those technologies that will help NASA's mission directorates achieve their established goals," said Larry Lechner, program coordinator.

The projects targeted for funding should be at a technical readiness level greater than three. Technical readiness levels range from one to 10 based on stages of development. Selected projects can receive up to \$150,000. Calls for proposals will occur twice during fiscal year 2006, with submissions for the first call due no later than Nov. 18, 2005.

As part of the rollout of this new program, Program Director Vernotto McMillan will provide a brief overview at directorate staff meetings across the Marshall Center.

For more information about this new program, visit: [www.nasasolutions.com](http://www.nasasolutions.com) and follow the Technology Investment Program link. *The writer, an ASRI employee, supports the Public and Employee Communications Office.*

## NASA's Exploration Systems Mission Directorate to hold Industry Day Nov. 1

By Sheri Bechtel

NASA's Exploration Systems Mission Directorate will hold an Industry Day Tuesday, Nov. 1, in Washington. The event will give industry leaders an overview of upcoming acquisition activities related to the implementation of the Vision for Space Exploration.

The Vision for Space Exploration calls for the safe return of the space shuttle to flight, completion of the International Space Station, and more ambitious robotic and human exploration of the moon, Mars and destinations beyond.

Topics to be discussed at the Industry Day event include program objectives and schedule, implementation plans for exploration programs and related projects, and acquisition strategies to be used for individual projects. Some of these projects include the Crew Exploration Vehicle, Crew Launch Vehicle, launch and mission systems, exploration communications and navigation systems, extravehicular activities systems and future systems.

Also to be presented are an overview and introduction to NASA's Exploration Systems Mission Directorate, and its program and project organizations, including their center locations and project managers.

NASA's Industry Day will be held at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center Amphitheatre in Washington. Event hours are from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. EST. All presentations are unclassified.

For more information or for copies of charts and Industry Day sessions at the conclusion of the event, please visit: [www.exploration.nasa.gov](http://www.exploration.nasa.gov). *The writer, an ASRI employee, supports the Public and Employee Communications Office.*

## Employees tour agencies, see results of CFC donations



David Higginbotham/MSFC

Marshall Center employees recently visited a wide array of local agencies to learn how their Combined Federal Campaign donations impact the community. Local agencies hosted 233 visitors from the Marshall team during the campaign's bus tours. In the left photo, a group of employees from the Marshall Center and Huntsville Hospital visit the Kids Care Ambulance, a medical-response vehicle designed for children. In the



Doug Stoffer/MSFC

right photo, employees visit a local source of animal-assisted therapy, Therapy Partners, Inc. Marshall Director David King greets "Lady" and her handler, Diane Rodgers. This year's campaign tours covered 10 charities, ranging from direct-care givers to agencies that preserve local land or history for future generations. With a fund-raising goal of \$575,000, the campaign ends Nov. 11.





NASA/MSFC

## Crew Launch Vehicle panel tours Marshall Aerodynamic Research Facility

Members of NASA's Crew Launch Vehicle Aero Panel recently visited Marshall's Aerodynamic Research Facility, which is part of the Engineering Directorate Test Laboratory. The group toured the facility and viewed a model of an Apollo re-entry capsule that is being readied for supersonic testing. From left are Lawrence Huebner of NASA's Langley Research Center in Hampton, Va., assigned to Marshall; Terry Taylor of Marshall; Charlie Cockrell, Richard Wahls and Darlene Pokora of Langley; and Victor Pritchett, Rebecca Farr and Robert Williams of Marshall.

## Marshall team members graduate from NASA Leadership Development Program

Seven Marshall team members recently completed the NASA Leadership Development Program.

The Marshall participants were among 31 from nine agency centers to complete the year-long program, which includes developmental assignments, a class project, individual coaching, training and briefings by NASA leaders and outside experts. Participants are competitively selected at the agency level.

This year's class project was to create an easily understood business

model, detailing how and where work is being done within programs and projects across NASA. Participants also completed a NASA collaboration handbook — a study begun by last year's class — on best practices for collaboration between agency program and project leaders. To see the handbook or class project results, go to: <http://ldp.nasa.gov/>.

Marshall team members participating in this year's class were Pravin K. Aggarwal, Cindy C. Campbell, Helen J. Cole, Stacy M. Counts, William D. Greene, Robbie E. Hood and Andrew S. Keys.

## Podcast

*Continued from page 1*

The Science@NASA podcast, launched in December 2004, was created by Bryan Walls, a Marshall data systems engineer in the Center Operations Directorate and curator of Science@NASA. Today, it is one of the most popular podcasts available, ranked the No. 1 podcast from February to May in Podcasting News. In July, the Science@NASA podcast was featured in the "New & Notable" and "Science & Technology" sections of the iTunes Music Store Web site, and was listed on iTunes' Top 100 Podcasts page.

"Clearly, the public is hungry to hear from NASA," Walls said. "That's gratifying."

"This is the kind of innovation in reaching people that NASA needs," said Ron Koczor, who manages Science@NASA at Marshall. "We have a great message to share, and podcasting is a nice addition to our means of communicating that message."

Science@NASA spotlights the entire spectrum of NASA science news, including

the vast number of Earth science, space science and other research projects under way at the Marshall Center, at the National Space Science and Technology Center in Huntsville, across NASA and among numerous agency contractors and academic partners. The Web site includes news in English and Spanish, and links to mirror sites in 10 other languages, where non-NASA volunteers provide translation services.

"We reach from the microscopic scale, to the human scale, to the astronomical scale," Koczor said. "We cover everything from cutting-edge physics to space transportation to advances in weather forecasting. Our goal is to give our readers the context and background to understand what they read or hear from other sources."

Earlier this year, Ann Whitaker, then director of the Science and Technology Directorate at Marshall, presented Walls with an "On-the-Spot" award for innovation and creativity. The award recognizes exceptional creative effort in meeting NASA and directorate goals.



Science@NASA podcasts can be downloaded from iTunes or other online news streaming sources.

There are several options for listening to the podcast. Podcast directories — Web sites such as PodcastDirectory.com, Podcastalley.com, and PodcastPickle.com — permit users to listen to podcasts directly from a browser. Podcast client programs let users subscribe to their favorite podcasts. Users can listen via the client program, or load the podcast into a portable MP3 player to listen on the go.

To listen to the Science@NASA podcast, go to any of the podcast directories and search on "NASA," or point a podcast client to <http://science.nasa.gov/podcast.xml>.

# Silver Snoopy Awards presented to 22 Marshall team members

Silver Snoopy Awards were presented to 22 Marshall team members Oct. 17 by astronauts Danny Olivas and Terry Virts during a visit to the Marshall Center.

The Silver Snoopy is the astronauts' personal award to members of the workforce for outstanding and exemplary work. The Snoopy emblem reflects NASA and industry's sense of responsibility and continuing concern for astronaut flight safety. Less than 1 percent

of the space program workforce receives the award annually.

Olivas is a mission specialist selected by NASA in 1998. He is responsible for ensuring proper configuration and integration of future International Space Station modules and visiting vehicles. Selected as a pilot by NASA in 2000, Virts is assigned as a CAPCOM, communicating with station and shuttle crews from mission control in Houston.



David Higginbotham/MSFC

From left, Layne Carter, John Sharp, astronaut Terry Virts, Jay Russell and Ray Ortega.



Terry Leibold/MSFC

From left, Stacy Jones, astronaut Danny Olivas, and George Ritter.



David Higginbotham/MSFC

From left, Shawn Breeding, Xavier Newby, Ron Hodge, astronaut Terry Virts, Kenneth Goggans, Melanie Gregory and Brenda Lance.



Terry Leibold/MSFC

From left, Mike Terry, Michael Effinger, Mindy Neidermire, astronaut Danny Olivas, Michael Frazier and William McMahon.



Terry Leibold/MSFC

From left, Steve Brewster, Buddy Rawls, Rick Middleton, astronaut Danny Olivas, Philip Swofford and Kendal Coker.



NASA

Rick Williams, Senior Safety and Mission Assurance Resident Office engineer, was presented a Silver Snoopy Award by STS-114 astronaut Jim Kelly, in Canoga Park, Calif.



## Rudolphi receives leadership award

Marshall Center Director David King, left, presents a Space Flight Awareness Leadership Award to Mike Rudolphi, manager of the Space Shuttle Propulsion Office, at a Shuttle Propulsion Office all-hands safety meeting Oct. 12. The award is given to outstanding leaders who exemplify the characteristics necessary to achieve success. Rudolphi was recognized for leading his space shuttle team to safe return to flight through his ability to solve complex issues and obtain the necessary resources and support to accomplish a mission. He also was recognized for clearly communicating mission plans and motivating employees to embrace the mission; empowering them to complete assignments; and setting a high personal standard for excellence and integrity.



David Higginbotham/MSFC

## Marshall to unveil time capsule

The Marshall Center is unveiling a unique time capsule that will contain items submitted by the Marshall team observing the Return to Flight and the future of space exploration. The capsule will be sealed in a ceremony during the STS-114 postflight crew visit on Nov. 9.

Marshall team members, including civil service and contractors, have the opportunity to submit memorabilia items and their predictions on the future of space exploration for inclusion in the time capsule.

Items for the time capsule will be accepted until Nov. 3.

For information on how to submit an item, go to [http://www1.msfc.nasa.gov/INSIDE/announcements/time\\_capsule\\_102605.html](http://www1.msfc.nasa.gov/INSIDE/announcements/time_capsule_102605.html).

## Know the protocol for displaying the flag of the United States at half-staff

Several provisions in the United States Code, as well as presidential proclamation, standardize rules on displaying the nation's flag. These rules include appropriate times when the flag can be displayed at half-staff. The Marshall Center will display the flag at half-staff in accordance with NASA Policy Directive 1020.2I, provided under Title 4, Chapter 1, Section 7(m) of the United States Code and Presidential Proclamation 3044. These provisions can be accessed at: [http://www.access.gpo.gov/uscode/title4/chapter1\\_.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/uscode/title4/chapter1_.html). Other times when the flag may be displayed at half-staff include:

- Following the deaths of certain current or former NASA officials and other U.S. or foreign officials as specifically requested by the president.

- Upon the deaths of prominent state and local officials under authority delegated to agency center directors and in keeping with a state's protocols and direction from the governor. Center directors also may honor agreements with local military base commanders — with whom a NASA center shares space — to show mutual respect.

The Marshall Center flag protocol officer is Owen Johnson, manager of the Protective Services Office.

## Shuttle Return to Flight team earns National Space Club award



David Higginbotham/MSFC

At the annual Von Braun Memorial Dinner on Oct. 17, the National Space Club-Huntsville awarded the 2005 National Space Club Astronautics Engineer Award to the Shuttle Return to Flight team. John Hall, chairman of National Space Club-Huntsville and Carla Bossard, chair of the Von Braun Memorial Dinner, are presenting the award to Marshall Center Director David King. King accepts the award on behalf of Administrator Mike Griffin for the NASA team. The Astronautics Award is given annually to a scientist or engineer (team) who has made an outstanding contribution to United States leadership in the field of rocketry and astronautics.

# Marshall Center's Impact Test Facility nears completion



Impact Test Facility, in the left photo, managed by the Materials and Processes Laboratory of the Marshall Center's Engineering Directorate, is nearing completion in the East Test Area. The facility will help the Marshall Center expand testing of thermal protection systems, space power systems and space habitats — important components in NASA's long-term space flight goals. The facility uses helium, powder and electric guns for high-velocity impact testing, evaluation and verification. It will house the water drop, multi-particle and exploding wire guns, along with associated test



equipment. These will be used for impact testing to enhance the research and development of material technologies and debris-shielding concepts. The facility is expected to be complete by mid-November. In the right photo, personnel in the East Test Area place a shipping container onto the ballistic gun slab. The container will house a large gun with a 25-foot-long, 3-inch-wide barrel, capable of shooting projectiles up to 3,000 feet per second. In addition to space exploration work, the facility will be available for specialized military, business and industry testing.

Photos by Andy Finchum/MSFC

## MISSE

*Continued from page 1*

International Space Station. Two suitcases of samples were deployed during STS-105 in August 2001. They were retrieved four years later during STS-114 in July 2005 by mission specialists Steve Robinson and Soichi Noguchi.

Finckenor will lead a diverse team of scientists and engineers who will analyze a wide variety of spacecraft materials and the effects of space on these samples. The team will submit a "first-look" report of its findings in 60 days, and a full report in June 2006. However, Finckenor said they already have garnered quite a bit of information from just looking at the samples.

"We have observed atomic oxygen erosion and darkening due to ultraviolet radiation on some of the samples, while other samples have not changed at all," Finckenor said. "We have noted over a hundred meteoroid and space debris impacts, too."

While the original emphasis of the experiment was on space station materials,

there will be a lot of useful data for achieving the Vision for Space Exploration, Finckenor added. The Vision calls for space shuttles to return to safe flight to complete the International Space Station, and human and robotic exploration of the solar system. "I think there will be an interest in any kind of material that can hold up for four years. This experiment also will identify what materials not to use."

It also will help with ground simulations, she said. "We can't completely copy the space environment in the lab, but having real data from space gives us more confidence that we're doing our simulations right. It also helps us make corrections if we over- or under-predict what will happen to a material."

Managed at the Langley Research Center in Hampton, Va., the materials experiment was a cooperative effort between the U.S. Air Force, NASA and aerospace industry partners.

*The writer, an ASRI employee, supports the Public and Employee Communications Office.*

## Obituaries

**Joseph H. Beumer**, 75, of Huntsville died Oct. 3. He retired from the Marshall Center in 1987 as a patent attorney. Survivors include two sons, Dan Beumer of Madison and Bill Beumer of Huntsville; one daughter, Barbara Beumer of Cincinnati; one brother, John Beumer of St. Florian; and two sisters, Agnes Gruber and Edith Buffler, both of St. Florian.

**Jewell W. Brady Sr.**, 86, of Huntsville died Oct. 2. He retired from the Marshall Center in 1974 as a production controller in the Test Lab. Survivors include one son, David R. Brady of Trenton, Fla.; one daughter, Lavinia "Beanie" Hailey of Huntsville; and one brother, Jesse R. Brady of Huntsville.

**Oscar L. DuPre' Jr.**, 68, of Somerville died Oct. 2. He retired from the Marshall Center in 1995 as a contract specialist. Survivors include his wife, Glynn Brownell DuPre'; three sons, David DuPre' of Chattanooga, Paul DuPre' of Huntsville and Phillip DuPre' of Trussville; and one sister, Alison Crowe of Plantation, Fla.



# Classified Ads

*To submit a classified ad to the Marshall Star, go to Inside Marshall, to "Employee Resources," and click on "Employee Ads — Submit Ad." Ads are limited to 15 words, including contact numbers. No sales pitches. Deadline for the next issue is 4:30 p.m. Thursday.*

## Miscellaneous

Wrought iron table, thick beveled glass top, 4 chairs, \$400. 256-882-7799

Dinette table, 6 chairs, light oak and white, \$175. 721-0709

Whirlpool washer & dryer, \$200; Whirlpool refrigerator, \$200; antique wardrobe, \$150; antique buffet, \$200. 534-8186

Pennsylvania House video cabinet, Cherry, holds up to 30" TV/VCR/DVD, \$750. 931-427-2059

Bunkbed, blue metal, full bottom, twin top, \$35; paintball gun, black magic e-cocker. 379-3606

2003 American Star 5th wheel trailer, 30', many upgrades and extras, \$26,000. 683-8085

Antique buffet w/3 drawers, Queen Anne feet, 67"Lx24"Wx38"H, \$800. 830-0254

GE microwave, 2004 Spacesaver, \$85; Kenmore dryer, late 80s model, \$75; car ramps, \$15. 256-603-6041

Duncan Phyfe dining table, \$199; four antique dining chairs, \$199; roll-away bed, \$75. 772-6427

Emerald and diamond bracelet, \$3,500. 961-7889

Wedding dress w/veil, size 8, \$100; computer desk w/bookshelf pedestal, \$100; Craftsman workbench, \$300. 776-9165

Dell Axim5 handheld, folding keyboard, Veo Camera Program Street Atlas, word games, leather case, \$300. 256-498-2028

Lane rocker/recliner, \$45. 890-0799

Laminate flooring w/pad, 180 square ft. left over, new, in box, \$1.00 per sq. ft. 256-673-0045

Pennsylvania House video cabinet, holds up to 30" TV, VCR/DVD, Cherry, \$750. 931-427-2059

1993 Rockwell pop-up camper, king/queen beds, sleeps 6, refrigerator, stove, \$2,500. 230-6819 after 4:30 p.m.

GE washer & dryer, 1-year old, \$400. 348-8640

Baker's rack, black, wrought iron, glass shelves, \$60; LaBarge, brass & glass table, \$250. 325-8588

Cutler Hammer load-center w/flush mount cover, 34"x14"x3.75", new, \$30. 766-9348

Kenmore washer and dryer, \$95 each. 837-6649

Antique Victorian couch, \$650; 1956 RCA stove top/oven, w/large canning eye, used 6 years, \$165. 882-0271

Cabelas DryPlus insulated coveralls, youth large, \$50; Cabelas DryPlus insulated bibs, large, \$100. 880-7305

Camper shell for small pickup, 60"x75", Gray fiberglass, \$400. 656-4804

Beau Soleil tanning bed, 1.5 yrs. old, 20 new bulbs, 3 months old, facial tanner. 256-586-2994

Vintage 1950s-60s BB guns, lever-action, Model 66, two 1894s & Buffalo Bill Scout, \$450. 303-3702

Beginner's full-size pool table, Brunswick Varsity w/balls, cues, bridge, & brush, \$150 firm. 534-2368

Van console w/TV and DVD, \$175; Monessen vented LP gas logs, \$100. 881-7000

Heat and air gas pack, 3-ton, \$75; telescoping clothes rack, \$15. 256-852-6952

Lane reclining sofa, new, light tan micro-fiber, 88" long, \$450. 539-4297

Two black computer desks, one with wheels, \$45 each. 603-3558

Back Yard Adventure playground set, \$3,500. 746-9861

Large solid wood computer cabinet, Maple color, \$85. 852-9847

Andirons w/eagle atop brass ball; Statton Hepplewhite sideboard; limestone sills/headers. 882-1097

Designer wicker set, 6-piece, plus extras, 4 yrs. old, \$1,700. 864-0278

1998 Volvo S70 GLT, 73K miles, loaded, leather, 5-cyl. turbo, one-owner, no damage. 256-882-9741

1987 Mazda RX-7, 93K miles, original engine, 5-speed, blue, service records, \$2,399. 722-9274

1996 Chrysler Town & Country, 97.7K miles, green, factory tow package, rear air, leather, extras, \$4,100. 256-355-6858

2005 Volvo S60, 6K miles, warranty 6/60K, white w/tan leather, sunroof, \$29,000. 881-1968

1974 Jeep CJ5, Chevy 350, automatic transmission, many new parts, \$1,850. 683-9364

1950 Studebaker champion convertible, fully disassembled, parts & service manuals, \$3,500. 256-830-5654

2000 Nissan Altima, black, auto, CD, cassette, alloy, 123K miles, \$5,900. 256-881-7690

1977 Jeep Wagoneer Quadratrax 4x4, 360/V8, DANA 44 axles, \$1,000. 256-497-3518

2001 Ford Explorer Sport, 2WD/V6, 106K miles, \$7,300. 533-4244

Villian II ski boat, new motor, \$3,000; 2003 dirt bike, Gas Gas 300DE, \$3,000. 679-0073

1995 Volvo 940 Turbo wagon, one-owner, 155K miles, records available, \$5,000. 714-3504

2001 Jayco travel trailer, 30', queen/bunk beds, a/c, fridge, heater, stove/microwave, awning, sleeps 8, \$11,000. 859-0729

## Wanted

Car dolly, prefer pivoting platform with brakes. 881-5139

Two Alabama/Utah State football tickets, Oct. 29. 961-3339

Four 6' tables to be use in hobby room. 325-0499

Old sliding glass doors, will pick up. 874-7874

Scooter, gas-powered, running or not, or small street bike. 325-6000

Sofa that makes a full-size bed & computer for internet and email. 880-9025

Four tickets, don't have to be together, Alabama vs. LSU. 233-4574

## Free

Purple Martin gourds and poles. 881-6595

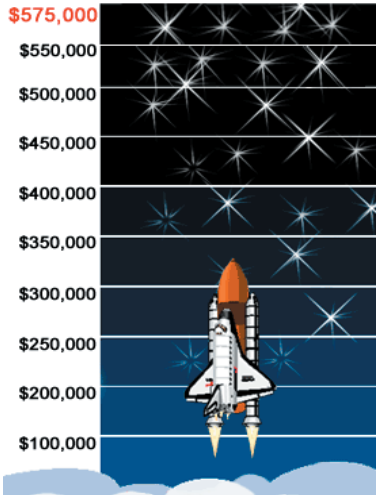
## Carpool

Arab area, 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. 586-2994

## Instrumentation Division retirees meet Tuesday

Astrionics Lab Instrumentation Division retirees and friends will meet at 11 a.m., Tuesday, Nov. 1, at the Redstone Golf Course Restaurant.

For more information, call Tom Escue at 232-1549.



### **CFC aims for its \$575,000 goal**

The Marshall Center's 2005 Combined Federal Campaign runs through Nov. 11. So far, 32 percent of Marshall's civil service workforce has contributed \$322,500 toward the center's \$575,000 goal. That's an average gift of \$427 each from the current 843 participants out of the 2,649 eligible to donate. The campaign began Oct. 3. To make their CFC contributions, employees can login to WebTADS. Retired employees can call David Percival at 544-0192 for a contribution form.

## Vehicles

2001 Dodge Durango SLT, blue, leather, 84K miles, \$10,500. 603-9902

1996 Nissan Maxima GLE, 4-door, V6, automatic, leather, radio, power, cruise, \$4,900. 656-6330

2002 Lexus ES300, mystic sea, leather, dual climate, 18" wheels, many extras. 852-2656

1996 Mercury Mystique, new transmission, tires & battery, \$2,200 or trade for 4-wheeler ATV. 216-8868

1999 Chevy Astro minivan, 61K miles, \$7,350. 882-2076

2001 Ford Explorer Sport, V6/2WD, 110K miles, \$7,300. 509-3559

## Marshall's Dan Irwin improves life in Central America with science

By Rick Smith

In his laboratory at the National Space Science and Technology Center, Marshall Center researcher Daniel Irwin spends his days helping safeguard the nations of Central America from wildfires, floods, deforestation and other environmental threats.

The rest of the time, he ponders ways to improve the lives of the people there in more personal ways — like building the first library in a region twice the size of New Jersey, and erecting the first playground thousands of Guatemalan children have ever seen.

Irwin is project manager for SERVIR, the regional environmental visualization system developed at the NSSTC. SERVIR's robust imaging and mapping technologies help Central American governments and scientists identify sudden environmental changes, from tropical storms and "red tides" of toxic algae to the ravages of deforestation. Irwin helped open the SERVIR facility in City of Knowledge, Panama, in February 2005.

In 1993, he first encountered the town of San Andrés, Guatemala, while mapping local forests for geographic information systems and training local researchers to use remote sensing technologies. He met Julieta Puga there too — and married her in 1996, making San Andrés his second home.

That fact compelled Irwin to tackle other needs in the town. "In a community with 2,000 kids, there wasn't much for them to do," he says. The park was overgrown and abandoned. There was no library, no recreation center — nowhere kids could be kids. Irwin decided to change that.

swing set or seesaw," he says.

Luckily, Irwin had joined the Marshall Center and learned that the state of Alabama teams with Guatemala in the Partners of the Americas program, devoted to improving western-hemisphere relations. With \$7,000 in donated funds, Irwin and Guatemalan

handyman Tito Chi designed a playground based primarily on the "Kids Kingdom" site in Madison, Ala. Irwin's team purchased tools and durable plastic components in Huntsville, and flew to San Andrés over Christmas 2004 to oversee the project. Scores of volunteers turned out to cut wood, raise timbers and assemble slides, swings and monkey bars. Before the playground was finished, workers were mobbed by 2,000 children eager to try it out.

Today, the Carlos Soza Manzanero Community Playground — named for one of Irwin's late partners — serves

more than 4,000 children from nearby communities. It has become such a popular spot that Irwin and his partners plan to build six more sites in 2006, spreading them across Guatemala to serve as many communities as possible.

"There's nothing else like the sound of kids on a playground," Irwin says. "They sound exactly the same no matter where you go. I love that sound. It's universal."

*The writer, an ASRI employee, supports the Public and Employee Communications Office.*



Courtesy photo

**Marshall researcher Dan Irwin, left, and Guatemalan builder Tito Chi stand together in the newly finished Carlos Soza Manzanero Community Playground in San Andrés, Guatemala — the brainchild of Irwin, Chi and their partners.**

In 1999, supported by donations and grants, Irwin and some partners built the "Viva la Selva" library. Filled with donated Spanish books, telescopes and computers, it was the first children's library in the region, and has since spawned others across Guatemala. In 2001, the library added a cultural center to revive interest in traditional music and dance.

Still Irwin wanted to do more. He dreamed of building a playground. "A whole generation of kids there had never seen an operational

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